

# National Volunteers Week Your money or your time!

**Don't wait to be asked - volunteer! It's Volunteers Week from 1-7 June and there's more to do than just rattle a tin, says Richard Hill**

**W**hat do a 17-year-old schoolgirl, a retired policewoman, a darts team and a dog have in common? Like thousands of other across the country, they all do voluntary work for doggy charities.

From 1-7 June, the profile of volunteers is raised through National Volunteers Week. Co-ordinated by the National Centre for Volunteering, "Volunteer Week focuses on the incredible difference the millions of individual volunteers make to our society, when giving their time, energy and commitment to benefit others."

## No one ever asked

The reason why more people don't become involved in voluntary work is well known by most organisations. And it's really simple - no one ever asks them! Also, many people immediately think of collecting on street corners on flag days. And that's all.

## Lots to do

Voluntary work is much more diverse than this, no more so than in the world of canine related charities. Being a volunteer not only benefits the cause but can also be of immense personal value to the volunteer - personal satisfaction, a feeling of doing something worthwhile.

**Also, many people immediately think of collecting on street corners on flag days. And that's all**

But there is even more, people have a chance to gain new skills, to share the ones they are already proud of. Young people find volunteering useful in

building their confidence and interpersonal skills.

Those temporarily out of work find it helpful in keeping their motivation and skills honed. Retired people have a wealth of skills that they enjoy putting into practice and passing on to others. The range of opportunities is too wide to be covered here, but includes puppy walking, practical work at dog rescue centres, fundraising, working with dogs and people with disabilities or in hospital, working in charity shops, serving on committees, administration... the list goes on. Talk to your chosen charity to ask what you can do to help. Don't wait to be asked.



## It's never too early...

Dispelling the myth that voluntary work is for older people is Lucy Warrell. Lucy is 17 years old and has been a volunteer at the Dog Rescue and Welfare Society in Buckinghamshire for 18 months. She spends three hours every Saturday as a kennel assistant. Despite the hard and sometimes unsavoury aspects of the work, Lucy finds it extremely rewarding. "It's given me great confidence in handling dogs, especially aggressive or frightened ones," she says, "and I've picked up things about breed identification, ailments and behavioural problems in dogs." Lucy hopes to become a vet in the future and these skills will certainly be useful.

## Or too late

Doreen Baker began voluntary work with dogs when she retired from the police force. Doreen devotes a lot of time supporting PRO dogs by fundraising and visiting people in hospital with her PAT dog Misty. She started volunteering in 1990. "I saw PAT dogs on television," she says, "and thought that, as I had a dog with a good temperament, I'd apply." Volunteers and their dogs enjoy visiting people in hospital or other care centres. They know their dog will be appreciated

◆ Dogs for the Disabled are always pleased to hear from volunteers for fundraising



  
Dogs for the  
Disabled



and know that the dog will love being the centre of so much attention. "You feel good," says Doreen, "as I did when a lady thanked me and Misty for making her laugh and cheering her up."

## But people have a chance to gain new skills, and to share the ones they are already proud of

Doreen also fundraises for PRO dogs, including organising an annual sponsored dog walk. Last year the charity voted her the PRO dogs' top walk organiser. She raised nearly £3,000. Doreen stresses that none of it would have been possible without volunteers.

## There's always a first time

Husband and wife John and Janet Edwards first became involved in voluntary work when they attended an awareness day run by Canine Partners for Independence (CPI) last year. Together they decided to raise a few hundred pounds to buy a puppy for the charity. In October, they held their very first fundraising event and so far have raised over £4,000. They are now aiming to reach £5,000 to cover the cost of training the puppy too. "If you have the enthusiasm, the commitment and the time, the response can be quite overwhelming," says Janet. The couple have now formed a local supporters group for CPI.



**Waggy Tails  
Rescue**

(Incorporated in England)  
REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 106257



◆ Waggy Tails fostering



◆ Canine Partners for Independence

## But help's on hand

There are many different ways to raise money for an organisation. The larger charities often provide guidelines on fundraising techniques, dealing with the media, and can provide other resources such as posters and so on. They support their volunteers by providing fundraising ideas, or national campaigns involving local participation and organisation.

## Needn't be dull and worthy

Puppy Lifeline runs a typical national fundraising campaign on a local basis, and down the "local". They encourage teams to take part in darts marathons. This year so far, nearly 80 teams are registered and national fundraiser Jan Edwards is hoping for more.



## Nor hard work

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association lists a whole range of achievable targets for local fundraising in its "Fundraising for Guide Dogs" leaflet. These range from £4 to buy a grooming kit for a guide dog (an ideal target for a youngster) to £2,500 to sponsor a guide dog and training partnership. Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is running a "Touch and Tell" appeal to raise money to develop a new puppy socialising centre. Hearing Dogs also plan to open their second charity shop this year.

## The PDSA has a chain of shops throughout the UK and is always keen to recruit more volunteers

## Shop 'til you drop

Charity shops offer another volunteering opportunity. The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) is typical of a charity that has a chain of shops throughout the UK and most are keen to recruit more volunteers.





♦ Darts for Puppy Lifeline

## Advice lines

The People and Dogs Society (PADS) uses volunteers to staff the telephones on their Canine Advice Line. This year, PADS celebrates its tenth anniversary and is currently seeking volunteers to serve on their committees. "You don't need any special experience (of dogs or committees)," says the charity, "but you do need an interest in and a love of dogs."

## Fostering

Falling in love with a dog is exactly what Waggy Tails Rescue does not want its volunteers to do. The Bournemouth-based charity puts dogs into the temporary care of volunteer foster homes, prior to re-homing on a permanent basis. "I can't pretend that taking in a stray is an easy job," explains founder Shelagh Meredith. "Fostering requires looking after a dog as if it were your own, while trying not to fall in love with it."



♦ Top fundraiser Doreen Baker was rewarded by PRO Dogs

There really are lots of voluntary opportunities working with dog-related charities. The rewards are enormous, both for the people involved and the dogs.

## The larger charities support their volunteers by providing fundraising ideas

There are a number of ways of finding out about charities working in your area. Your local library or local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) should be able to help. Check out these sections in your local classified telephone directory: Animal Welfare Organisations/Societies, Charities and Voluntary Organisations. The Kennel Club can give information on local dog rescue organisations while the National Centre for Volunteering has details of all national local charities and voluntary organisations. There are also sources on the internet for finding local dog-related charities including our own website at <http://www.madaboutdogs.enta.net>



## Contact list

**Canine Partners for Independence,** Homewell House, 22 Homewell, Havant, Hants PO9 1EE, tel 01705 450156.

**Dog Rescue and Welfare Society,** Tower Farm, Oxford Road, Stokenchurch, Bucks HP14 3PD, tel 01494 482695.

**Dogs for the Disabled, The Old Vicarage,** Ryton-on-Dunsmore, Coventry, Warks CV8 3ER, tel 01203 302050.

Website: <http://www.vois.org.uk/dftd/>

**Guide Dogs for the Blind Association,** Hillfields, Burghfield, Reading, Berks RG7 3YG, tel 0118 835555.

Website: <http://www.gdba.org.uk/>

**Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, The Training Centre,** London Road, Lewknor, Oxon, tel 01844 353898.

Website: <http://www.hearing-dogs.co.uk/>

**People and Dogs Society (PADS),** 18 Bransdale Walk, Altofts, Normanton, West Yorks WF6 2SR, tel 01924 897732.

Website:

<http://www.gurney.co.uk/pads/>

**People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA),** Whitechapel Way, Priorslee, Telford, Salop TF2 9PQ, tel (Freephone) 0800 854194.



♦ Lucy Warrell with Rosie at the Dog Welfare and Rescue Society in Buckinghamshire

**Pets As Therapy (PAT dogs),** Rocky Bank, 6 New Road, Ditton, Kent ME20 6AD, tel 01732 872222.

**Puppy Lifeline,** Farplace, Sidehead, Westgate, Co. Durham DL13 1LE, tel 01388 517397.

Website:

<http://www.weardale.co.uk/puppylifeline/>



## Internet Sources

Charity Commission

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/index.htm>

Charitynet Website

<http://www.charitynet.org/main.html>

National Centre for Volunteering (see Volunteers Week)

## Volunteers Week

National Centre for Volunteering, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL, tel 0171 520 8900.

Website: <http://www.vois.org.uk/voluk/>

Waggy Tails Rescue, PO Box 3041, Bournemouth BH3 7ZQ, tel 01202 554000.



Stars in the making - Hearing Dog puppies

Kennel Club, 1 - 5 Clarges Street, Picadilly, London W1Y 8AB, tel 0171 493 6651. Website: <http://www.the-kennel-club.org.uk/> **MAD**



◆ The most patient dogs in the world at Guide Dogs for the Blind

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